Notes of Visits to Puket, Ghirbee and Trang.

By C. W. KYNNERSLEY.

Left Penang at 5 p.m. on Friday, 27th February, 1903, in s. s. *Avagyee*, (owned by KOE GUAN,) which trades between Penang and Rangoon calling at the Siamese ports *en route*.

Arrived at Pukét at 2.30 p.m. on 28th. Since I was there two years ago quarantine sheds have been put up opposite the light-house and there is said to be a good water supply there.

The harbour continues to silt up and undoubtedly the mining works have made matters worse. Where I landed last time is now a high mud flat which I hear is going to be mined.

The site of the present town is all tin land. The principal road to the landing place has been diverted to allow a mine to be opened. Borings are being taken by the Government Offices and if tin is found the site will be sold and new Offices built elsewhere. Everything is sacrificed to the mines. At the present price ($97) it pays well to work mines which were given up at my last visit when tin was about $60. SIM BEE has been very busy laying out new roads. The road which the late Commissioner was opening up has of course been abandoned as a bad one. A new road (60 feet) has been laid out by the edge of a new mine parallel to the principal shop street, the land on either side which is low being filled in with the overburden from the mine. Shop houses will be built and a new market erected. I noticed several improvements since my last visit. Then the place swarmed with pigs. These have been banished outside the town. On the outskirts of the town among the brushwood I noticed the mounds of new Chinese graves. SIM BEE said he was going to stop indiscriminate burying and have a Chinese Cemetery. The last Commissioner said the same. The last

Commissioner told me he had put a stop to clearing hill sides for hill padi. SIM BEE said he had stopped it. Jungle fires are still frequent and there is no timber to speak of left near Tongkah. SIM BEE talks of a Forest Department under an Officer from Bangkok. A beginning has been made to put the main road to Naito (the other mining centre) into repair and a mile and a half has been done. A new road is also being made in the direction of Pa Prak, the old telegraph trace made by the former Commissioner, with poles and wires still standing, being abandoned as bad. New poles have been ordered and the wire will shortly arrive. I was assured that the line would be in working order in a few months. The trace goes through Kesúm, Pungá, Ghirbee and Trang to Na-kón when it joins the line from Kedah to Siam.

Cultivation does not seem to be encouraged and no one cares to plant so long as mining pays so much better. The mines absorb all the labour. Rice, fruit and provisions of all kinds are imported. It is a splendid place for coconuts but hardly any are planted. Fruit and vegetables come from Penang. I went to see the Judge sitting in Court. He is not overworked. There are about two cases a day. Only five people were present including a prosperous looking Chinese interpreter. We then went to the Court below which is presided over by the Ampúr who takes all petty cases and preliminary enquiries. Most cases are compromised. There is said to be little crime or disorder. Everybody is hard at work making money at the mines. The Ampúrs are poorly paid and it cannot be wondered at that they supplement their salaries.

After lunch I started for the mining town at Naito. We were escorted by two Siamese armed Police mounted on little Siamese ponies which trotted behind the carriage. At the place where the good road ends and a bridge is to be built we got into a Java pony-trap. From this point the state of the road is too awful for words, big stones, ruts and holes. It is certainly the worst road I ever attempted to drive over but we got along somehow—generally at a walk. When it was hilly we got out and walked. The jolting was frightful. Naito is about six miles off and we passed through open grass country with scrub on which buffaloes were grazing. The whole coun-

try seems full of tin. Among the low jungle hills cuttings have been made and in the wet season the tin is washed down. Naito has a large Chinese mining population and consists of a long street. Hundreds of coolies were assembled and the Gambling Farm was densely packed. Only Chinese are allowed to gamble, not the Siamese. We looked in at the Ampúr's Office and then walked on a mile or so along a sort of road in the direction of the highest hills (about 1,700 feet) through which there is a pass where there is a wonderful acqueduct on trestles across the valley constructed by Chinese for bringing water to the mines. We had no time to go there but I have seen a photograph of it. Returning to Naito we had some tea at a Chinese Toukeh's. I asked what he thought of the road He seemed hopeful and said it would be all right next year. He added that it used to be worse but this I think is impossible. There is a great deal of traffic on it, a stream of mining coolies, a good many buffalo carts and some gharries such as are used in Province Wellesley. Naito is famous for its water melons which are sent to Penang. One of the duties of the Ampúr, who is a sort of District Officer, is to report on mining applications and find out if the land is owned by anyone. They get low salaries, and are often corrupt.

After saying goodbye I entered a small dug-out which was hauled by 8 Siamese over a mud flat (dry) into the river or creek, whence in a boat we went off to the *Damrong Rat* which SIM BEE kindly placed at my disposal. He came on board to see me off and at 8·30 we steamed out of the harbour. The nephew accompanied me and I felt quite at home once more on the *Rat*. I had been solemnly warned in writing on good authority that the boilers of the *Rat* were pronouuced to be in a dangerous condition and I was warned not to go in her. I had however arranged to go in her and it was only an additional peril to a voyage in this rock-studded sea. I mentioned to JOO KEAT that I had been told the boilers were rather old. He said the Engineer of the *Ran Ruk* had patched them up and there were to be new boilers *next year*. This was consoling. It was blowing fresh but was not very rough. As we dodged among some rocky islands I said "I suppose the Captain knows the way?" I was informed that there were two Captains. After

this I rested in peace. Passed a long island on the left of Pulau Panjang where there are said to be 300 or 400 Malays who plant mangostins, the soil being good, and a few Chinese who advance money to Malay fishermen. No signs of habitation were visible and it was said they were at the back of the island. Passed under some high limestone rocks with caves with rattans hanging down said to be used by edible birds-nest collectors. No sign of life till a little North of Ghirbee where there was a fringe of coconuts with a mountain somewhat like Kedah Peak inland (Khaw phanum.) There were masses of limestone hills as at Pungá but not so high. There are two mouths to the Ghirbee river and we followed the one to the right, the usual mangrove creek, and after two or three bends came to a landing stage on the right bank about 1.30.

The Assistant Governor came off in a house boat and I was received on the jetty by the Governor whom I had met before at Trang. Officials and a Police guard were drawn up. This is the new town site. The Governor took us to a temporary house where we were served with tea and cigarettes. He said "This is a poor house. I am making the new road you see and I hoped to move the town here but it will not be till *next year*." I said I should very much like to see it and we walked round preceded by Police with a man carrying an umbrella over me. The Siamese seem to have a craze for moving towns. It is interesting work no doubt and gives the Governor something to do but when these new roads—a kind of circular road with two roads leading to the sea and a very steep one to a wharf on the river—are completed the question is whether, except under compulsion, the people in the old town or village some miles further up the river will occupy the sites. The site is said to have been approved by Prince DAMRONG. I had not time to visit the present town so I cannot say if it is worth moving. As in all new Siamese roads trees are planted at intervals on either side of the road but the ansana stumps (*Pterocarpus endicus*) do not seem to grow as they do in the Straits probably owing to the prolonged drought. Other trees are doing well. The Governor is a pleasant genial man and a sportsman. He talks a certain amount of English. He said it was a very good country for sport. He had shot an elephant and another was shot a few days ago.

There were also deer and rhinoceros and tigers. There is little cultivation in Ghirbee and no tin. The revenue is very small but no doubt it has undeveloped resources. The coal or rather lignite is of no value. He said that people were afraid to settle there till he came on account of dacoits. Two Siamese murdered a Chinaman and robbed his house and then killed an old woman to keep her mouth shut. They were caught and executed at the place. I had heard of an execution recently taking place and asked if that was the case. He informed me that the affair took place over two years ago and the men had just been executed. The law's delays were in this case protracted. I asked if it wasn't rather a long time to keep the men under sentence but he said : " We had to get the order from Bangkok and then they appealed." I told KEAT if they wanted a name for the new town they might call it Pi Nah (next year)* On our return we were regaled with long glasses of coconut water and cigars. At 2.30 we took leave as the tide was falling. We had intended taking a short cut through an inner channel inside Khaw Fu and Ma Fu but they said there was only a depth of 3 feet in places and many rocks, so we went out to sea and round Pulau Lantar. This took a long time and it got dark. We passed several rocks and islands and did not get to Telibon anchorage till 11.30 p.m. when I turned in on deck. The wind had blown from the West all day but at night there was a land wind. We found the Tongkah Police launch at anchor. She had been sent on ahead to inform the Governor of Trang of my visit.

Wednesday, 4th March.—Got up about 7 a.m. and after tea landed at the Custom House—a few Sam-sam huts—fine beach for coconuts but only one growing. A Chinaman advances money to fishermen and bark collectors. Very low tide early, turned about 7.30 when we started. Anchored at 9.30 at firewood jetty up Trang river and waited for tide to rise—breakfast. At 10.30 stuck on mud bank and waited ½ an hour till enough water. Got to Kantán at 11.30. Pepper and fowls being put on junk for Penang. The Governor PHRA SUTHON on landing place, Police Guard, 3 carriages Scarlet (faded) livery. Drove

*Spain is the land of Manana, in Siam it is always "Pi nah."

to SIM BEE'S house and bathed. He mentioned Yong Setàr the chief place in Pelian and I asked what 'Yong' was. He said it was the Siamese contraction of Tanjong. I think there is no doubt that Junk Ceylon is a corruption of Yong (Tanjong) Phalúng or Salúng. Phalúng was the great mining place before Tongkah mines were worked at the end of the promontory or island which we call Junk Ceylon. I never quite believed in the 'Ujong Sálang' derivation. There is no town at Kantán which is the seat of Government. The former town of Kuantăní was demolished about 10 years ago. It is about 6 miles higher up the river. On the opposite side of the road facing the wharf at Kantán is a row of about half a dozen Chinese shops an this constitutes the town. The houses of the Officials are built along a country road and the Government Offices (still in course of construction) stand on a low hill above the river and road. After lunch we went on board the launch with the Governor up the river which winds about till we got to the landing place near the site of the abandoned town. We might have driven the whole way but carriages were sent on. Along the banks is a fringe of jungle with padi land beyond. The site of the old town appeared to be a good one, high ground with fine old ansana trees. Only a Wat and a few attap huts remain among fruit trees. We stopped at one place near to see 33 big cannons taken from Kedah when it was overrun by the Siamese. They are piled up among brushwood. The road is a good one. We drove from Kuantăní. It is simply a red earth broad road and in dry weather dusty. There is hardly any wheel traffic but it is largely used by people walking from place to place. It would be excellent for bicycling. We crossed several streams on timber bridges, *gium* a hard wood being used for supports and planking. The village of Bong Rat was passed. Padi fields cultivated by Siamese extended on either side where the land was low. A drive of about 5 miles brought us to the town of Tap Tiang. Along the main street are brick shop houses and there is a considerable Chinese population. A great Market is held every three days. It has been held that morning and I was sorry to miss it for it must be an interesting sight. The Market which is farmed for $100 a month is held in a large square building. Long attap sheds open at the side extend

round the sides and there are two cross sheds. Produce from country is brough in on Market days and disposed of. Meat, fish, poultry, fruit and vegetables have divisions of the Market set apart for them. It is very largely attended. Chinese Societies have been suppressed and the former Kongsi house has been turned into the Ampúr's Office. Along the road from Kantán newly cut telegraph posts were lying and are to be set up shortly. The telegraph goes to Na-kón. The wire from Kedah to Singgora goes through Na-kón to Bangkok. The line is being laid from Kantán to Ghirbee, Pungà, Kesún to Pukét. The posts are of hard wood and cost $1.20 each where felled, being taken to the road by Government. They are said to be ready for putting up as far as Na-kón and in the Eastern State adjoining Trang the Pân palm which is said to be durable is used. Shade trees has been planted the whole way. From Tap Tiang we walked about 2 miles till we reached the Rest house where we were to sleep. It was built for the reception of the King who however did not use it. It is a good house standing high everlooking the plain with the hills in the distance. Trang is famous for its good pepper which commands a high price and is said to have a special aroma. There were plantations on either side of the road. The pepper vine is trained on two sorts of soft wood trees, mengkûdu and dedap. The vines are grown on red soil which is kept clean. During the dry season, which lasts several months, the plants are regularly watered from wells. The planters are all Chinese chiefly Cantonese and a few Hokiens. At Yong Setár pepper is grown in black soil by Tiochews who do not water the plants. If watered when young it has to be continued. To the East are the hills on the way to Na-kón, then the Patălóng hills with the highest range Foi-dow, and further south Pelian and Setúl. The climate on the East of the hills is said to be quite different. Padi there is two months later and when it is dry this side it is wet beyond the hills. Trang, Girbee and Pungá were formerly under Na-kón which lies to the North of Sang-Kla called by the Malays Singgora. Na-kón is called by the Malays Le-gúr. The Malays, except the fishermen near the coast, hardly speak any Malay. They are Mahomedans and don't eat pork but in other respects they adopt Siamese ways. There are one or two Mosques but they

are badly attended. The Siamese keep pigs. The Chinese marry Siamese girls. No burial grounds are to be seen, the Siamese being cremated at the Wats. There is a Chinese burial ground at Tap Tiang. There are Siamese Schools about the country—education being free. One with 80 boys is about a mile beyond the Rest house and I meant to visit it but had not time. It is held at the Wat and boys from the villages beyond walking distance are lodged at the Wat. The Kam-nán makes boys go to School. There are also Chinese private Schools. The upkeep of the Government Schools, cost of books, etc., is defrayed from the Market rent at Tap Tiang.

The village administration is cheap and appears to be well adapted to the needs of the country. It is the Siamese system either based on, or like that of Burma. There is no forced labour. In Trang are 5 Ampúrs, 1 for Kantán, 1 for Pelian at Yong Setár, 1 for Bong Rat at Tap Tiang, 1 for Khaw Kow (white hill) North of Patălóng and 1 for Si Kow near Ghirbee. The Ampúr holds a Court for the trial or settlement of small cases—cases of importance being sent before the Judge at Kantán. An Ampúr gets 100 Ticals a month and allowances and he probably adds to his income. The only police in the country are at Kantán where they are chiefly ornamental, 12 at Tap Tiang (Chinese town) and a few at Yong Setár, where there are Chinese pepper planters. The Siamese and Malays are very law abiding and give no truble. Under the Ampúr is the Kam-nán or village headman. Of these there are about 30 in Trang. In one or to places where the Chinese predominate a Chinaman is Kam-nán. Under the Kam nán is the Phoo-yai-bán or head of 10 houses. The people of 10 houses or any collection of houses up to 20 elect the Phoo-yai-bán and Phoo-yai-báns elect the Kam-nán, one of their number. The Phoo-yai-bán receives a badge of Office in the shape of 5 silver buttons which he wears on his coat and the Kam-nàn has 5 gilt buttons. At intervals along the road are boards on which is notified the name of the village and the position of the Phoo-yai-bán's house. The village headmen look after the roads and bridges and road side trees, the road being kept up by the people except where it passes padi fields. The coolies who sweep the road and keep it clean are paid. The trees are planted twenty-four feet apart. The only land reve-

nue is a tax on padi land 8 cents a rei=120 square feet. This is paid to the Ampúr who keeps a register. He can keep $300 in his sub-treasury. Over that he must send to Kantán. The Kam-nán and Phoo-yai-bán get 5% commission on this padi-land tax. The owners of padi land have a document of title (corresponding to the Malacca 'extract') giving the name of the owner, the extent of the land and its position. No charge is made for land for other cultivation than rice, *e. g.*, pepper, coconuts. There is an export duty on pepper of 60 cents a pikul (said to be fixed by treaty). The present price for pepper is high $36 a pikul. The export duty on other produce timber, etc., is 10 per cent. *ad valorem* and the import duty is 3 per cent. Chinese get on well with Siamese and in the country go to the Wat. I noticed that men and women all have distinct vaccination marks, this is done by two Siamese doctors at the Ampúr's. There are no taxes—no house tax—except on padi land and on fishing which varies according to the fishing ground from $1 to $10 a year. If other taxes were imposed the Siamese would leave. There is no tax on fruit or coconut plantations or sugar or pepper. Land can be sold, the new owner getting the document of title. There is no tax on felling timber—only export duty. The population of Trang is 59,000—12,000 Malays and Samsams, 4,000 Chinese and the rest Siamese. The Revenue is about $120,000 and the expenditure $80,000. The Opium Farm is not included in the Revenue as it is reckoned as part of the Western States Farm. It may be taken as $65,000.

The Revenue is made up as follows:—

Gambling	$25,000
Spirits	25,000
Customs	60,000
Land, etc....	10,000
	$120,000

Including the share in the General Opium Farm the Revenue exceeds the Expenditure, (*i. e.*, what is sanctioned in the Budget) by about $100,000 which is remitted to Bangkok to provide for the needs of the poorer States. There is a proposal

to abolish the Gambling Farm and impose a poll tax on all males over 18. In the Eastern States where there are few Chinese this has been done. Since the Siamese were prohibited from gambling there has been scarcely any crime. Cock fighting is very popular.

The expenditure may be roughly stated as follows:—

Salaries	$30,000
Roads, etc.	20,000
Buildings	20,000
Other Expenditure	10,000
	$80,000 *

(*Diary continued*)

We got to the Rest house at 7.30 p.m. and had to wait for the cook and boys.

Thursday, 5th March.—It was not as cool as it ought to have been. When we got there the Governor said "It is not cool now because there is a wind—if there is no wind it is cool." The wind died down and then it was unmistakeably hot. We made a start at 6.40, KIAT driving me in a dogcart and the Governor following on a pony. The horse was inclined to jib and was only induced to go on (except down hill) by the syce shoving behind. I remarked that we should take some time to get to our destination (11 miles) but KIAT said "It will go very well when it gets tired." There seemed to be little prospect of this so long as the syce pushed us along but when once started it covered the ground well. On sighting a bridge the custom in Trang is for the syce to get down and test the bridge to see if it will bear. We passed through an extensive padi tract—a good deal of it being recently cleared. The Siamese, I should say, are quite as lazy as Malays if not more so. The ground planted with padi is only roughly cleared of timber, and stumps of trees are left. In time these become white ant mounds which are undisturbed—"too much trouble to remove" they say. I saw a large number of fine damar oil trees, some standing alone in the plain and some hundred or so together. The solitary

* Figures only approximate not official.

ones are tapped with burning holes and these trees would only last about 5 years. They are not allowed to be filled when the jungle is cleared for padi planting. The oil is sent to Penang in tins. There are said to be many damar trees on the Na-kón road and on the islands. SIM BEE told me that when he went to Trang the only talk was of dacoits and people were afraid to settle. Now they are not afraid and land is being taken up fast. The road was being swept like a drive and where there was a collection of houses the people turned out with their headmen and saluted by the roadside. The road was more or less level till we got to the foot of the hills (11 miles). At Chong is a rest-house and a clear stream from the hills. The road to Patălóng here rises through a pass. We walked through jungle along a path to what is called a Waterfall, large slabs of rock and pools but not much fall. In the rains of course it is a cascade. We crossed the stream on stepping stones and looked for orchids. We found a few and then had some food by the stream. Then we drove back to the Rest-house and bathed at a well in the grounds. I noticed *Congea* climbing among the brush wood. We left Chong about 10.0 and got the Rest-house at 11.30. There is another Rest-house 1 hour up the pass above Chong in the jungle where the King of Siam stayed two nights but he is said to have found it too cold. This would be a good place for collecting plants, etc. There are trees planted on either side the whole length of the road—Mangoes, ansana and a Siamese tree with a narrow leaf and yellow flower from which they make hair oil.

As we passed through Tap Tiang to go to the landing place at Tha Chin we saw a dead black planther by the Market. Black panthers are said to be very common. There is a reward for tigers, 30 Ticals, but none for panthers which only take fowls, pigs, etc. There are too many for a reward. There were 12 junks at Tha Chin built locally and registered at Penang. We had a very hot and tedious row in a house-boat—the river winding backwards and forwards—till at 3.15 we got to the wharf at Kuantăní where the S. S. *Artsadong* comes for cargo. Here a Malay Penghulu registered as a British subject came on board. We got to Kantán at 5.0. I landed and drove with the Governor to see the Public Offices—still unfinished. The bricks

are made by prisoners. The Offices will be finished "next year." Left Kantán in the *Damrong Rat* at 5.30. The tide was falling and we touched the first bar or mud flat at the 'Simpang'.

As we went up the river the serang had ordered firewood to be sent to Kantán for us but it never came so in their usual casual way we began our voyage without fuel. At the firewood depôt below the bar we had to anchor for two hours while we took in firewood. It was getting dark and there was no one in charge so they requisitioned boats passing down and eventually our men took a sufficent supply. It was very hot lying at anchor and mosquitoes came off. We had to dine there. As we got to sea there were very black clouds and thunder and lightning. There was a bit of a moon but it came on to blow and the rain drove us below.

Friday, 6th March.—Off the north of Lankawis early—cool—went very slow. Six tame porpoises came and played within a foot of our bows and kept it up some time. We took hours to pass Kedah Peak and it was 4.0 p.m. before we got to the Penang Jetty.